



The Conservation Volunteers Chair of Trustees Candidate Pack 2026



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Since 1959, we've been a charity creating opportunities for people to create, improve and care for nature in the green spaces around them across the UK. We think it's one of the most important things people can do, both for the planet and for their mental and physical health, and we're going to show you why.

Connecting over 100,000 people to nature every year

Our variety of projects cover a bit of everything involving nature. Volunteers muddy their boots in parks, community gardens, woodland, sites of special scientific interest, nature reserves, schools and hospital grounds, helping create a glorious network of protected green space across the UK. This work connects people with nature, and that connection delivers powerful results.

Restoring the UK's biodiversity

Biodiversity is one of our most powerful allies in the fight against the climate and ecological emergencies. And trust us – they are emergencies. Restoring biodiversity not only encompasses more nature returning to our lands – making for beautiful green spaces for everyone to enjoy – it is also key to the sustainability of the mutually supportive, interconnected web of all living things. By doing this we can strengthen ecosystems, reduce species decline, help prevent flooding, and decrease the risk of wildfires, things we see happening all the time on the news. Currently the UK ranks in the bottom 10% of countries in the world for biodiversity. Our work is designed to help change that, maximising the potential of people connecting with nature in our rural and urban landscapes. Their connection to and protection of nature, in turn, supports a wider range of plant and animal species, including vital pollinators, to call our nation home.

When nature thrives, we do too

It's not just nature that declines when we stop caring for it - people do too. According to Mind, the mental health charity, 25% of people in the UK struggle with their mental wellbeing, while official health data states that one in six deaths are linked to physical inactivity. More people are living with chronic disease, obesity and stress, while health inequalities continue to worsen across the UK, with the greatest effects being felt in the more deprived areas. Something needs to change, and we believe that we can play a vital role in that change.

Enabling access to green spaces is a huge step in the right direction. Our own research with the University of Westminster shows it improves mental health and encourages physical activity and is a vital component needed for people to live healthier, happier lives. This benefits whole communities as well as the wildlife around them.

A connected solution

Our work gives people the opportunity to take practical, meaningful action for the world they live in, protecting and restoring nature, and connecting individuals and communities to make a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. We believe local initiatives can inspire national change, and with a range of inclusive, accessible activities on offer, everyone can play their part in shaping a better world for today and tomorrow.

Bringing nature to everyone, everywhere

Not all of us have the option to live near safe, nature rich green spaces, which is why we continue to support initiatives in urban areas of high deprivation. We know that our work makes a huge difference to the tens of thousands of people who volunteer and connect with us each year, as well as to the environment, but we're confident that we can do more to help those who need it most. That's an ambition we'll take forward over the next five years - enabling nature and people to thrive in more ways than ever before.





WELCOME FROM OUR DEPUTY CHAIR



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair of Trustees at The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). On behalf of the Board, I am delighted to welcome you to this candidate pack and to invite you to consider leading an organisation that has brought people and green spaces together for more than 65 years.

At the heart of our work is a simple belief: nature should be for everyone. We focus particularly on people and communities who face barriers to enjoying the outdoors, including those living in urban areas experiencing high levels of deprivation. We want our leadership to reflect the breadth of the communities we serve, and we warmly welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and lived experiences.

This is an important moment to join TCV. The operating environment for charities is demanding, yet the need for our work has rarely been clearer. Our next Chair will guide a committed Board, work in close partnership with our Chief Executive and executive team, and help TCV remain ambitious, resilient and focused on achieving lasting impact for people, communities and nature, as well as driving forward financial sustainability.

We are looking for an inclusive and collaborative leader with sound judgement, strategic insight and a strong commitment to good governance. The successful candidate will know how to support and challenge constructively, create the conditions for every Trustee to contribute fully, and build trusted relationships across the organisation and beyond. Previous experience as a Chair would be welcome, but it is not the only route to success; what matters most is the ability to lead with integrity, curiosity and shared purpose.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, please contact me: joanne.gilbert@tcv.org.uk

With best wishes,

Jo Gilbert

Deputy Chair of Trustees, The Conservation Volunteers



WELCOME FROM OUR CEO



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for considering the opportunity to become Chair of Trustees at The Conservation Volunteers. You would join us at a defining point in TCV's journey. Our strategy, *Better Nature for All*, launched in July 2025, is ambitious and deliberately transformative. It sets out how we will increase our impact, strengthen our financial sustainability and develop an organisation equipped for the future. We have made progress, and there is much more to do. The next Chair will help us maintain pace, make thoughtful choices and keep our purpose at the centre of every decision.

Our staff and volunteers bring deep passion, creativity, experience, and commitment to our work. Our volunteers are the heart of TCV and our next Chair will enable them to flourish by supporting an effective Board, helping the organisation navigate complexity and creating the space for bold but responsible leadership.

The external context makes this leadership especially important: a third sector with reducing external funding, and increasing societal issues such as biodiversity loss, climate change and widening health inequalities. By enabling people to take practical action in their local green spaces, TCV creates benefits for nature, individual wellbeing and community resilience. Our ambition is to extend that reach, deepen our influence and make our distinctive contribution better understood.

Alongside strategic leadership and governance, we hope our new Chair will be an outward-facing advocate for TCV. Your relationships, credibility and willingness to open doors can help us build new partnerships, broaden our networks and strengthen TCV's voice across the conservation, health and community sectors. As Chief Executive, I believe the relationship between Chair and Chief Executive must be one that combines clear accountability with open dialogue, constructive challenge and a shared determination to achieve impact under our strategy '*Better Nature for All*'. I will value a Chair who listens carefully, asks incisive questions, can offer both wise counsel and honest challenge, and a combined commitment to work in partnership.

I believe this to be a deeply rewarding leadership position where you will work with talented Trustees, a committed leadership team, and passionate colleagues and volunteers across the UK who believe in our charity and the power of conservation volunteering. If you share that belief and can help us turn ambition into sustainable impact, I would be delighted to work alongside you.

Rebecca Kennelly

Chief Executive, The Conservation Volunteers

Our impact: 2025-26



We represent diversity



20% of our registered volunteers have a disability



34% of registered volunteers are from ethnic minority backgrounds



22% of our registered volunteers are in the top 20% most deprived UK areas

And of our volunteers...



OUR VALUES

Make stuff better

Constantly asking ourselves if we can improve on what we do and how we do it.

Crack on and muck in

Coming to work with a mindset as a team, getting the job done, and achieving what we set out to do.

Make a difference

We have a deep desire to ensure that everything we do leaves a positive and lasting ripple effect.

Be the best we can be

We are committed to role modelling the best of ourselves in all that we do and how we do it.

Make a positive environmental impact

Our commitment to ensuring that everything we do contributes to building a sustainable planet.

Our strategic goals 2025-30

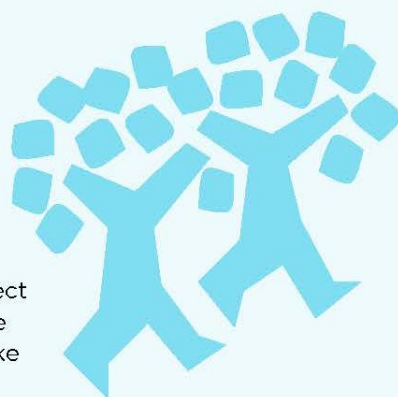


1. Protect and restore local environments

We will create, protect and restore local green spaces through volunteer action, improving biodiversity for the benefit of nature and people.

2. Empower others to take action for nature

We will inspire people to connect with nature and understand the practical action we can ALL take to protect and restore it.



4. Develop conservation and green skills

We will help strengthen the green skills economy, inspiring the next generation of conservationists by delivering transformative volunteering opportunities and traineeships.



3. Improve people's health and wellbeing through nature connection

We will bring people together with nature, equipping them with the skills and confidence to improve their mental health and physical wellbeing.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



We are committed to increasing equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisation. This means reflecting critically on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion within all that we do, identifying and taking appropriate actions to reduce inequality.

We welcome applications from anyone regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion or socio-economic background.

We are committed to inclusive working practices, and during the application process we commit to:

- Paying for your travel costs to the office and back for interviews if they are held in person.
- Making any reasonable adjustments – for example, ensuring we have sign language interpreters organised in advance if you'd like them.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.
- As a Disability Confident Employer, we commit to offering a first stage interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role.

If there is anything else you're concerned about or think we could provide, please do let us know.



OUR BOARD

The Conservation Volunteers is governed by a Board of Trustees. It is responsible for setting overall policy for The Conservation Volunteers and monitoring progress towards achieving our goals.

About the role

TCV is an ambitious organisation seeking a new Chair of Trustees to lead our Board, which works to connect people together to protect and restore nature, delivering lasting benefits for both.

We're particularly interested to hear from candidates who have skills in the following areas:

- Charity Leadership & Governance
- Passion for Conservation & Nature
- A great ambassador, who can help elevate and promote the work we do with external stakeholders.



ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Chair of Trustees provides leadership to the Board and helps ensure that TCV is governed effectively, acts in line with its charitable purpose, and delivers public benefit for communities, volunteers and the environment. The Chair leads the Board as a collective body, working in partnership with the Chief Executive and wider executive team while respecting the distinction between governance and executive management.

- Lead the Board in setting TCV's strategic direction, organisational culture and long-term priorities, ensuring that decisions advance TCV's charitable objects and public benefit.
- Ensure the Board approves, monitors and reviews the strategy, annual business plan, budget, risk management framework and key organisational policies.
- Maintain high standards of governance, transparency and accountability, ensuring compliance with TCV's governing document, charity and company law, regulatory requirements and trustee duties.
- Chair Board meetings effectively, ensuring agendas focus on strategic issues, papers support good decision-making, meetings are inclusive and well managed, and actions are followed through.





- Promote a constructive Board culture based on trust, respectful challenge, collective responsibility, openness, inclusion and commitment to TCV's values.
- Work with trustees and governance support to review Board effectiveness, skills, diversity, succession planning, delegations, committee structures and trustee development.
- Support, constructively challenge and hold the Chief Executive to account on behalf of the Board, including leading the Chief Executive's appraisal, objective setting and remuneration recommendations where appropriate.
- Maintain clear boundaries between the Chair, Board and executive team, enabling the Chief Executive to lead the organisation operationally within agreed strategy, budgets and delegations.
- Ensure robust oversight of financial sustainability, reserves, performance, internal controls, audit, risk management, safeguarding, health and safety, and organisational resilience.
- Act as an ambassador and advocate for TCV, helping to build relationships with partners, funders, supporters and stakeholders, and supporting the growth of TCV's profile, influence and impact.
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion, environmental responsibility and the values that underpin TCV's work.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

TCV is seeking a Chair who combines strategic leadership, strong governance judgement and a genuine commitment to TCV's charitable purpose. The successful candidate will be able to lead an effective Board, build trusted relationships and help TCV increase its impact for people, communities and the environment.

- Proven experience of strategic leadership at senior level, ideally in a complex organisation with multiple stakeholders.
- Prior experience as a Chair, Vice-Chair, trustee or non-executive director, with a strong understanding of Board-level decision-making and collective accountability.
- Prior experience on a charity board of trustees.
- Strong knowledge of charity governance, trustee responsibilities and the legal and regulatory context in which UK charities operate.
- Ability to chair inclusive, purposeful and well-structured meetings, encouraging contribution, managing challenge and building consensus.
- Ability to support, guide and constructively challenge the Chief Executive while maintaining appropriate governance boundaries.
- Strong financial and strategic acumen and experience of successful commercial models and an ability to confidently interrogate different business proposals and models.
- Financial literacy and the ability to oversee budgets, performance, reserves, risk and organisational sustainability at Board level.





- The ability to communicate the value and impact of TCV's work to funders and strategic partners and make a strong case for support and investment.
- Credibility and confidence to act as an ambassador for TCV and to build constructive relationships with funders, partners, supporters and other external stakeholders as well as meeting and engaging with volunteers, staff and community members.
- Commitment to TCV's purpose, values and impact, with an understanding of the importance of community, volunteering, nature, environmental action and social inclusion.
- A good understanding of land management, conservation, volunteering and communities.
- Excellent communication, listening and relationship-building skills, with the ability to engage volunteers, employees, trustees, communities and partners.
- Independent judgement, integrity, diplomacy and the ability to make balanced decisions in the long-term interests of the charity.
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the ability to help create a Board culture where different perspectives are welcomed and valued.
- Resilience, calm judgement and the ability to lead through change, uncertainty or periods of organisational pressure.
- Willingness and availability to devote the time required to fulfil the role, including preparation for and attendance at Board meetings, regular contact with the Chief Executive, trustee engagement and occasional external events.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Term of office

Board Members are appointed for an initial period of up to three years, with the scope to extend up to six.

Time commitment

Quarterly Board Meetings

Quarterly Governance & Remuneration committee meetings

Regular 121s with CEO

UK-wide site visits/events

External stakeholder events/meetings

Time commitment can be flexible depending on successful candidate availability but on average a commitment of 2 days per month.

Location

Board meetings are usually held at our Head Office in Doncaster, but we also periodically meet elsewhere across the country including London and remotely on occasions.

Remuneration

This position is not remunerated. Reasonable expenses are covered under our Board member expenses policy.

Learning and development

We are committed to supporting Board members' learning and development through training and informal learning sessions.

Conflicts of interest

All candidates will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, and these will be discussed with the candidate to establish whether any action is needed to ensure appropriate management.



HOW TO APPLY

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following information by **Monday 02 November 2026** at midnight, as applications will be reviewed, and shortlisting will be week commencing 09 November 2026

- A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum two pages) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application.
- Details of two referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and the period of time that they have known you (referees will not be contacted without your prior consent).
- Diversity monitoring form – your data will be stored separately from your application and will at no time be connected to you or your application.

Please send your CV and cover letter to hr@tcv.org.uk For further details please visit www.tcv.org.uk.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the role, please contact hr@tcv.org.uk in the first instance.

